(iii) To aid and advise the Central Government in evolving new governance structures for Universities.

(iv) To monitor the implementation of such recommendations of the Committee to advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education and the National Knowledge Commission as the Central Government may decide to implement.

(v) To aid and advise the Central Government in the establishment of Innovation Universities aiming at world class standards.

(c) and (d) An official delegation headed by the Minister of Human Resource Development visited some Universities in the United States (US) namely Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston University, Yale University and Georgetown University between 25th to 31st October, 2009. The delegation also interacted with Presidents of several other Universities, prominent academics and officials in the Department of Education in the Federal Government of USA. The discussions focused on the establishment of Innovation Universities and other institutions of higher learning in India. The Indian academe in the US expressed their keenness to participate in India' reform process for higher education. Among the issues discussed were the scope for evolving various models of partnership in Higher Education including Public-Private Partnership, encouraging twinning arrangement between universities in the two countries, joint assignments in Indian universities to Indo-American academe, invitations to academics from top US Universities in specialized fields of knowledge to Indian institutions to strengthen such fields in Indian Universities and encouragement to post-doctoral and graduate students from India to work with top academics and researchers in specialized areas of knowledge.

Effect of recession on SMEs

*131. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:
SHRI N.K. SINGH:

Will the Minister of MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's initiatives for mitigating the hardships of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have not really percolated down to the ground level;

(b) if so, the facts and details thereof;

(c) whether Government has taken any fresh steps to protect the small and medium enterprises which are hard hit by the current economic slowdown; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) Keeping in view the impact of global economic slowdown on micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the Government, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Public Sector Banks have taken several measures for

protecting and providing a stimulus to the MSMEs which, *inter alia*, include: (i) extending the loan limit under Credit Guarantee Scheme from Rs. 50 lakh to Rs. 1 crore with a guarantee cover of 50 per cent; (ii) increasing the guarantee cover under Credit Guarantee Scheme from 80 per cent to 85 per cent for credit facility up to Rs. 5 lakh; (iii) interest subvention of 2 per cent in pre and post-shipment export credit to small and medium enterprises (SME) sector; (iv) refinance limit of Rs. 7,000 crore to Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for incremental on-lending to the micro and small enterprises (MSE) sector; (v) grant of need-based ad hoc working capital demand loans up to 20 per cent of the existing fund-based limits; and (vi) reduction in interest rates for borrowing by micro enterprises by 1 per cent and in respect of SMEs by 0.5 per cent. These policy measures/initiatives and thrust on augmenting credit delivery to the sector have resulted in increasing the outstanding credit to micro and small enterprises (MSE) sector from the Public Sector Banks from Rs. 1,51,137 crore as at the end of March 2008 to Rs. 1,91,307 crore as at the end of March, 2009 (latest available).

For the promotion and development of MSMEs and to enhance their competitiveness, the Government is laying thrust on the implementation of ongoing schemes/programmes, which include National Manufacturing Competitiveness Programme, Credit Guarantee Scheme, Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme, Performance and Credit Rating Scheme, Cluster Development Programme, Prime Minister's Employment Generation programme and Market Development Assistance Scheme. In addition, a special fund of Rs. 4,000 crore has been provided to SIDBI to incentivise Banks and State Financial Corporations (SFCs) to lend to MSEs and to facilitate the flow of credit at reasonable rates to the sector. Further, a High Level Task Force under the chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister has been constituted to address the issues of MSME sector.

Agrarian Crisis in India

*132. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the views of globally famed Agriculture Scientist Professor M.S. Swaminathan expressed during April, 2009, while releasing the book 'Agrarian Crisis in India', relating to 100 million plus small farms, comparing Government's agrarian crisis solving approach as "blind men feeling an elephant"; and

(b) if so, whether Government will be concentrating on "differentiation between the problems of farming and those of the farmers", to achieve more than 4 per cent annual growth in agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) As per a news item appearing in the web edition of the Hindustan Times dated 7th April, 2009, Prof. M.S. Swaminathan has reportedly made such remarks while releasing the book titled 'Agrarian crisis in India'.